

I Ran by firstofhername

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Summary: When Jennifer Hale gets taken into the Upside Down with Will Byers, she thinks the world is ending. Then she falls for Steve Harrington, and she knows it is.

I Ran

Disclaimer: I own nothing but Jennifer and her own storyline.
Contains minor language.

PROLOGUE:

1. The Vanishing of Will Byers and Jennifer Hale

November 6th, 1982

"...and I ran, I ran so far away..."

Jennifer taped her nails against her steering wheel to the beat of the song as she started her car. Her eyes darted to the rear view mirror and she pursed her lips, checking to make sure her lipstick was still perfectly stained on her lips. She swiftly pulled out of her driveway and pulled into the road. Her eyes caught a familiar figure on the side of the road and she smiled, slowing down the car.

"Hey, kid. Good campaign?"

Dustin's bike slowed to a stop and he stuck his head through the open passenger window, flashing her his adorable, gummed smile. "Yeah, Mike really did good. We fought the Demogorgon!" he gushed. Jennifer nodded and smiled, having no clue what he was talking about. "Is your mom still out of town?"

"Yeah, for another week," she answered, rolling her eyes. "But hey, maybe you and the other boys could come over this weekend. I'll let you guys take the second floor all for yourselves, if your mom is okay with it."

Dustin's eyes lit up. "Really? That would be bitchin'!" Jennifer let out a laugh and rolled her eyes, before leaning over to tap his hat affectionately.

"Sure, bitchin'. Now get home, kid. It's a school night," she chastised. Dustin's eyebrows furrowed.

"Isn't it a school night for you, too?" Jennifer grinned and dropped her eye in a wink before turning her music back up. Dustin rolled his eyes and began biking in the direction she came from.

Jennifer let one arm hang out her car window as she drove down the dark street. As much as she loved her mom, and she did, she couldn't lie and say she was upset when she found out she was going back to Chicago for two weeks. The alone time had been great, and if her mother had been home, she wouldn't be able to do this. Between classes, cheer, and work, she rarely had time to relax.

She rolled her lips together, frowning at the familiar feeling of a beginning peel. She reached into the passenger seat and began digging through her bag in search for some Chapstick, making sure to keep her eyes on the road. Her finger caught on something sharp and she quickly drew back her hand, cradling it to her chest. "Shit!" She looked down and saw a small crimson bead.

She returned her gaze to the street, only to let out a shrill scream at the sight of a tall figure. She jerked the wheel to the side in surprise and slammed on the brake, bracing herself for the tree she was headed towards. The hood crashed into the trunk sending her jerking forward, her forehead slamming into the steering wheel. She let out a groan as she sat back, blinking away the spots that had appeared in her vision.

After pausing a moment to gather her bearings she undid her seat belt, dragging herself out of the smoking car. She fell to her knees and began crawling across the dirt- had she drove into the forest? She was vaguely aware of something coming up behind her, but her head ached too much for her to realize its importance. "Help," she groaned out as she collapsed forward, before rolling onto her back.

Her eyes struggled to focus on the figure as it approached, seeing it get closer. She rapidly blinked as the figure's head got closer, her terror beginning to swell as she realized how truly fucked she was. She tried to shuffle backwards away from it, failing. "Please," she pleaded, eyes swelling with tears. The creature brought its head less than 6 inches away from her own.

"...I just ran, I ran all night and day..."

In one last effort, Jennifer opened her mouth and let out a deafening scream. But it was all in vain, for before the sound had fully left her mouth, the creature's face opened up and it let out it's own deafening roar, and then everything went black.

"...I couldn't get away."

Jennifer shot up with a gasp. She had terrible headache and a searing burn in her lungs. She gave herself a few moments to calm down, her eyes darting around. Her eyebrows furrowed in confusion as she took in her surroundings. She was still in the woods, but the large creature was no where to be found. She let out open mouth pants as she stood, taking everything in.

"What the hell...?" she whispered, eyeing some floating flakes in disgust. It was difficult to tell what time it was, as the whole sky was a purplish-grey. It was freezing. She pulled her shirt sleeves down as far as they would go and brought her arms up across her chest. Her car was gone, which puzzled her, but she decided to worry about that later. Right now she needed to find some warmth and ease the ache in her brain.

She made her way out of the woods and back onto the street. She waited close to ten minutes and frowned when she saw no cars coming or going. It must've been early in the morning. She huffed and chewed her lip, weighing her options. If she turned left and walked back home it would take her so long she'd probably freeze. If she stayed there and waited for a car, she'd definitely freeze. Jennifer pursed her lips and looked right. The Byers' house was close. She knew Joyce would be okay if she stayed the night, especially once she heard what had happened. With a tired sigh she started down the road and headed for the small house.

She was limping and had a searing pain in her left foot that she hadn't realized before, no doubt curbed by the adrenaline. She glanced down at her watch as she trudged, frowning at the time. It couldn't be 9:15, it wasn't possible with the sky color. It must have broke in the crash. Jennifer frowned; she had loved that watch. She guessed it took her thirty minutes to walk to the Byers'.

Jonathan and Joyce's cars were both gone and all the lights were off. Weird, she thought. She limped up the driveway and up the stairs, knowing they kept a spare key in the flower pot. She quietly opened the door and drug herself into the house, falling ungracefully on the couch. She looked around the house, stomach turning in unease. Something was very wrong.

The house was dark and gloomy, and just as cold as outside had been. The same flakes floated in here as well, and she cringed thinking what they could be. She realized, with a start, that it was silent. Not just quiet, like most nights were, but completely silent. There was no hum of airplanes, no rumble of passing cars. She couldn't hear noises of far off neighbors or the ticking of a clock. No owls or crickets or noises of any kind.

It was complete silence.

A ball of terror began to form in her gut as she tried to call her breathing once more, silently telling herself not to panic. She was overreacting, or she had a concussion. That was it.

"Jenny?" She let out a shriek and jumped near a foot at the hushed whisper. "Shhh!" She put a hand to her chest, willing her heart to start pounding. She squinted into the dark hallway, filling with relief at the small shadow she locked eyes with.

"Will?" she whispered back, standing and limping over to him. "Thank God, Will. What the hell is going on?"

"The monster," he whispered back, eyes filled with terror. "Did it come for you, too?" Jennifer hesitated, thinking back to the tall dark figure. She wanted to say no, to reason with him that monsters didn't exist. But as the image of its face opening up resurfaced, she knew that reason wouldn't win this time.

"Yeah, yeah it did," she whispered. She let out a sigh and pulled him into a hug, running her fingers through his light brown hair. "It's okay, kid. We'll figure this out, we just need to figure out what's happening."

"It's the Demogorgon," he whispered, pulling away to look at her.

Jennifer's eyebrows furrowed at the strange word, recalling Dustin's use of it earlier.

"But, that's just a game," she pointed out. Will pursed his lips and looked out of the living room window, an uneasy look on his face.

"Unless it isn't," he whispered.